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RS, AF  
SUBJECT: CSTC-A COMMANDER DISCUSSIONS WITH EU PERMREPS:  
INTERNAL EU DIVISIONS ON EUPOL

Classified By: Laurence Wohlers, USEU Minister Counselor for Political Affairs, for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a presentation to EU permrep officials in Brussels on May 23, MG Robert W. Cone, Commander of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), provided a wide-ranging briefing on the challenges confronting the international effort to create a modern Afghan police force. Cone told EU representatives that the United States was actively working with the EU's police mentoring and advising program (EUPOL), praised EUPOL for its advisory role at the national level, its input on ministerial reform and its deputy commander, and pushed the EU to take on a heavier workload at the district level. Cone's presentation was well received by the European attendees. However, several contacts separately told USEU that the planned doubling of EUPOL and the potential for increased U.S.-EU police reform cooperation may be in jeopardy if the EU cannot sort out internal disagreements in the coming months.

¶2. (C/NF) A principal issue is EUPOL's controversial commander, Jurgen Scholz, strongly supported by his native Germany, but widely seen as a failure by key member states, working-level Council officials, and U.S. observers in Kabul. For the moment, Council officials close to Solana continue to insist officially that all is well and that the EUPOL mission is making progress. Privately, contacts hope that the problem will go away in September, when Scholz's mandate is slated to end. However, in the meantime, there appears to be a serious risk that the EUPOL mission will fail to adapt to events on the ground and come up with an effective approach to cooperation with U.S. police training efforts. If that happens, an opportunity to add significant additional EU resources to Afghan police training efforts will be lost. USEU would welcome perspectives and information that other EU-27 capitals can provide. End Summary.

Focus on the district level

¶3. (SBU) On May 23 MG Cone met informally with EU member

state officials and Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) representatives to discuss the challenges and areas for improvement in the international effort to create a professional and accountable police force in Afghanistan. MG Cone emphasized that the International Community police training effort must be comprehensive, addressing the reform issues from the national to district levels. He further emphasized that focus on the district level, where the police represent the face of the government to the Afghan people, was the essential point of reform and development at this stage of the Afghan conflict. He stressed that the Afghan police must be successful at the district level before they could be effective at the provincial one. Since the greatest need for mentor personnel is in the districts, Cone suggested that, if EUPOL wants to stay at the provincial level, they would need to deploy in sufficient numbers to fill-in for CSTC-A trainers who could be freed up for district positions.

Regardless, he said, any additional EUPOL personnel should be deployed outside of Kabul. Cone added that several EU member states had conveyed to him a desire to accelerate district-level police reform, to which Cone suggested that CSTC-A do the heavy lifting at the outset, while EU member states picked up police training after a district becomes stable in order to sustain reform and aid transition of the police towards a more modern police model.

¶4. (SBU) Several representatives asked MG Cone for his perspective on the right long term strategy for EUPOL. Cone replied that in addition to the excellent advice and quality mentoring in the Ministry of Interior which EUPOL already provides, EUPOL could help integrate into the Minister of Interior-EUPOL-CSTC-A program the Police Training Assistance Teams (PTATs) in PRTs, as well as with Criminal Investigations Divisions (CID) and Internal Affairs training, and police non-commissioned officer standardized training.

Elephants in the room

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¶5. (C/NF) Not addressed in the briefing, but widely known to both sides, was a significant leadership problem facing EUPOL. Key member states (UK, and the Netherlands) and CPCC leadership view current EUPOL Head of Mission (HoM) Jurgen Scholz as ineffective. Scholz replaced the first EUPOL HoM, Friedrich Eichele, after his resignation in September 2007, following complaints of Eichele's management style, contentious relations with Solana's Special Representative in Afghanistan, and EU leaders' serious concerns regarding EUPOL's then weak start. Member state and CPCC contacts have told USEU privately that Scholz is viewed as ineffective because he is reluctant to travel to the various provinces where the EUPOL mandate extends and because he is erratic in his dealings with Brussels and the International Community (IC). However, member states would be reluctant to try to remove Scholz because he would be the second German commander removed within a year. It is rumored (but not confirmed) that Scholz may leave at his one year mark as Head of Mission in September 2008. However, according to CPCC contacts, Berlin does not seem to understand that Jurgen Scholz is ineffective and needs to be replaced. While silent about Scholz during his briefing to member state representatives, Cone mentioned several times that Kenneth Deane, EUPOL Deputy Head of Mission, was effective because he understood the counter-insurgency policing environment. Member state contacts told USEU following the briefing that Cone's frequent references to Deane had not gone unnoticed.

¶6. (C/NF) Member state and CPCC contacts have also suggested to USEU that a personality conflict between the CPCC Chief of Staff Matthew Reece and Scholz may account for some of Scholz's erratic dealings with the IC. It is possible that Scholz returns to Kabul with the impression that his efforts are criticized too sharply and not appreciated by Brussels, and therefore may be more reluctant to lead and coordinate as effectively as he could. The new Civilian Operations Commander, Kees Klompenhouwer, returned last week from his

first visit to Afghanistan, where he assessed EUPOL. Klompenhouwer is expected to deliver his report to member states soon. CPCC contacts hope that the recent appointment of a new Civilian Operations Commander will alleviate the problems caused by personality conflict between the CPCC Chief of Staff and Scholz.

17. (C/NF) Another problem for EUPOL -- raised indirectly at the meeting -- is that bilateral efforts by member states on police reform are more effective than EUPOL, largely because there tend to be fewer limits placed on the operations of individual member states. In the briefing, Cone highlighted the UK's bilateral policing work at the district level. When the Italian PSC representative asked for Cone's perspective on an advance plan on border policing (Italy has a border police training mission), Cone suggested that the United States and Italy work on it together. In the context of a EUPOL that isn't able to do what we want, the superseding practical need seems to be moving us to work more bilaterally with Europeans in order to ensure effective police training efforts with maximum participation.

18. (C/NF) Lastly, there is an unresolved issue that continues to color every discussion we have with the EU on EUPOL. The EU twice has requested discussions on a bilateral technical agreement in which the U.S. would provide logistical, force protection and medical support for EUPOL police to operate in U.S. PRTs and Regional Command Centers.

Without this, EUPOL can not formally deploy to U.S. areas. To date, the U.S has not responded to the EU's request. While the EU acknowledges this has not proven a significant obstacle on the ground, they have made clear their dissatisfaction with the lack of a formal agreement. The EU is based on legal agreements and member states would be furious with the Brussels based managers of EUPOL if it were determined that an incident involving a EUPOL police officer were the result of the lack of legally sanctioned support.

Comment

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19. (C) The window of opportunity for the IC to influence police reform in Afghanistan is closing. The United States wants EUPOL to make an effective contribution to that effort, but EUPOL is unlikely to evolve any time soon into a large, district-based police training mission. That said, we should focus on finding other ways that EUPOL can contribute to advancing U.S. goals. To do so, EUPOL needs strong leadership, more personnel, a more flexible mandate and better complementarity with CSTC-A. Political and Security Committee (PSC) representatives from member state foreign ministries decide on the details and size of EUPOL. There was a big push by a number of member states in 2007 to get EUPOL up and running, partly in response to the USG's request that the EU do more in Afghanistan. The political capital expended on building up EUPOL ensures that it is here to stay. Therefore, our efforts should focus on influencing EUPOL's form and structure.

110. (C) Unfortunately, the internal EU coalition that created EUPOL is now split between those who do recognize the gravity of EUPOL's leadership and mandate problems and those who do not. In the EU universe, this is a recipe for policy blockage. While EUPOL's existence won't stop member states from working with us bilaterally, it will draw on their resources (especially the Germans). From our vantage point in Brussels, the best approach going forward is to look at how we can support the UK, the Dutch, the Irish and other like-minded member states most inclined to lobby for changes in EUPOL's leadership and mandate. In this respect, we would welcome perspectives from London, the Hague, Dublin, and Berlin -- those member states most engaged in the EUPOL project. We should keep in mind that continued dysfunction at EUPOL is in nobody's interest, but neither is an acrimonious end that could endanger further EU engagement in Afghanistan. In that vein, it would be useful to take key member states' pulse on how to make EUPOL as effective as

possible while continuing to benefit from complementary  
bilateral contributions to the police reform effort. End  
Comment.

¶11. (U) MG Cone has cleared those portions of this report  
pertaining to his engagement.

MURRAY

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